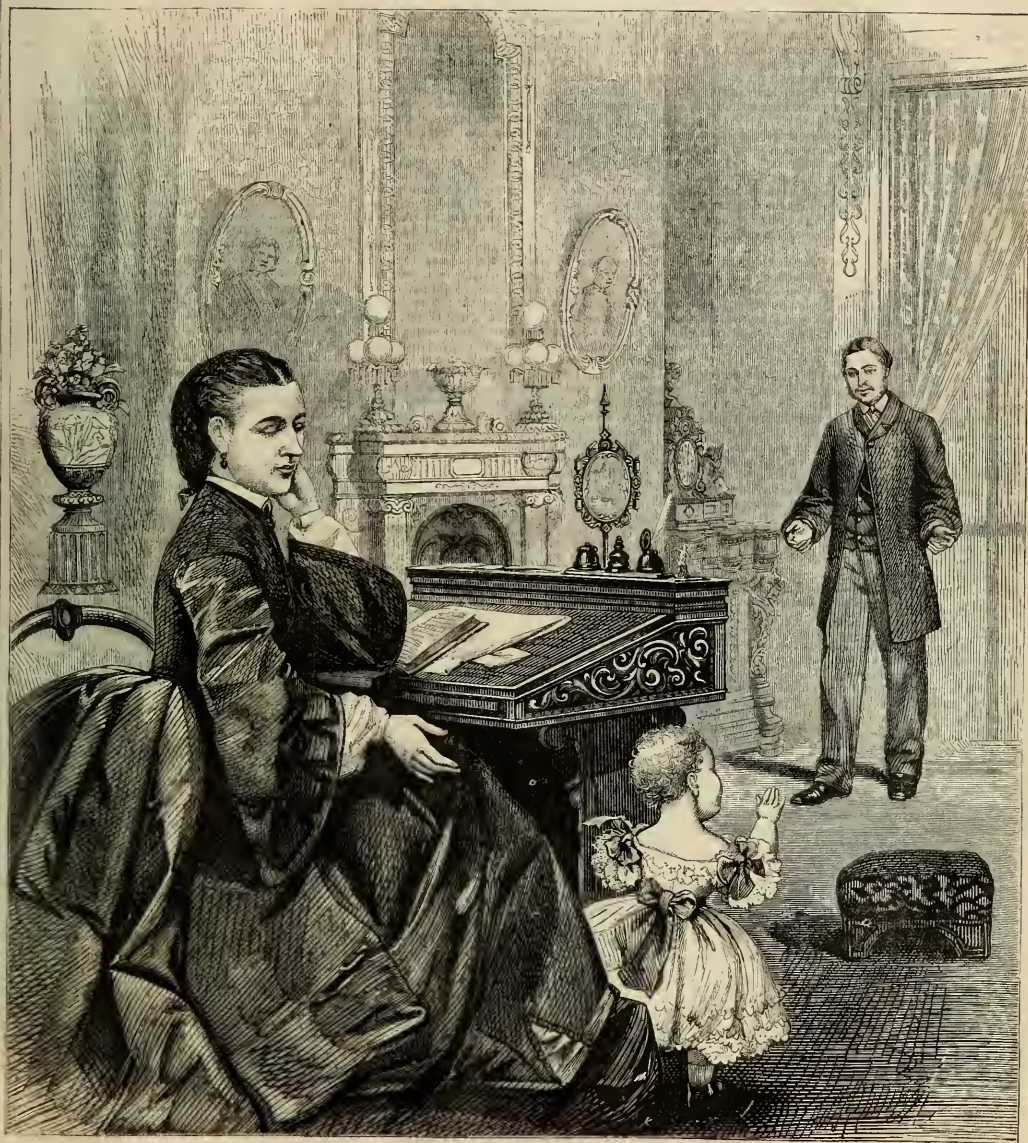


THE BRITISH WORKWOMAN OUT AND AT HOME.

"A Woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.—Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her."—Prov. xxxi.



"YES, DEAR! PAPA IS COMING."

THE SCHOOL-FELLOWS;

OR,
WHICH IS BEST?

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A WOMAN'S PREACHINGS FOR WOMAN'S PRACTICE."

"You mean, of course, Martha, to go to Dunthorne Fair,"—a kind Jessy Hydeale, of one of her young companions, as the scholars poured forth from the school where they attended, one founded by Lady Marinton, who resided at Dunthorne Hall, in Suffolk. Martha did not immediately reply to this query, and Jessy talked rapidly on—"I have saved ever so much money, and I mean to have such fun."

Martha looked at her. "Why, Jessy, this morning we were asked to give each a halfpenny to the Missionary box, and you told governors you had no money."

Jessy coloured. "Oh, I meant none to spare."

"But, Jessy, that was untrue; if you have money to spend at the fair, surely you could have spared a halfpenny for the box."

"Untrue! How you do preach—there's no harm in saying things like this besides, what good can our halfpennies do, I should like to know."

"Jessy! Only yesterday we read about the widow's mite, and that as she had given as much as she could, it was accounted the same as the rich man's gift. Our hallance, and the mites of other schools, make a good sum, I have heard Mrs. Vincent say, in the course of a year."

"Well, I've nothing to spare for such things; I'm satisfied to have enough to save a little for spending, without giving one's money away—you may do it if you like,—you know," sneering, "you're one of Mrs. Vincent's pattern girls; thank goodness, I don't set up for such things; and I think, Martha, you're a Pharisee, and nothing more,—there, you see I can recollect Scripture lessons as well as you."

Martha's eyes filled with tears; but she was a meek little girl, and never took offence if she could help it. She had been taught that she must strive to follow the example of the one who especially taught the disciples to avoid wrath and strife; and though she sometimes had a hard struggle to keep resenting affronts, she did try, and was rewarded in the peace of mind and happiness she found to ensue from such a practice. "I hope I am not proud, like a Pharisee," she said gently; "but, Jessy, do you think it right to go to the fair?"

Jessy opened her large black eyes in amazement. "Why, whoever says it is wrong; don't all the girls in Dunthorne go?"

"No, not all. Mary Dawson, Jane Wood, Caroline Hill, don't mean to go;—and—I am not going." "No going! Well, that is droll; you went last year."

"Yes, but I was so fatigued and ill after going, that, even if mother and father saw no harm in it, I should never care to go again; but when I believe it is not right, I should certainly not enjoy myself."

"Well, you must have a fine taste. Why, there are the shows to begin with, and the swings and roundabouts, and a dancing booth, beside gingerbread nuts—and such games."

"Mother says that for girls who wish to be thought respectable, such things are bad; but she says, too, that though amusements are not forbidden, there are some which tend to make young people bold and hardened, and often tempt them to begin doing wrong which finishes in some dreadful way."

"Oh, that is very fine," said Jessy, "but I mean to go for all that; and when you see my fairings, I know very well you'll wish you had done like me."

"There's another thing," Martha said, hesitatingly; "you know, Jessy—as well as I—that we hope, when we are old enough, to get places at the Hall. Now Lady Marinton declares she will take no girl out of the school, either for her own service or to recommend them, that goes to either Dunthorne fair or the races."

"Oh! there we are, we are; then, it is not because it is sinful, Mrs. Prudence, but because you are afraid of not getting a good place? Well, I don't care. I can get a place any where; and as for the Hall, I don't want to be there, I am sure. One might as well be in prison, if all Mabel Price says is true."

"Fie, Jessy, I don't like to hear you talk so. I would rather do right for right's sake, and not for the worldly advantages I may reap; but you seemed so bent on going to the fair, that I tried any means to persuade you not to go."

"Thank you, Miss Martha," said the pert Jessy, "mind your own business, and I'll mind mine, and at the end of a few years I dare say I shall be as well off as you—perhaps rather better."

"I am sure I hope you may," was Martha's mild answer, as she turned into her mother's cottage.

And Jessy kept her word, and went to the fair in company with a parcel of girls, as wild and ill-disciplined as herself. They, as she sweetly visited the booths, and in riot, that was anything but pleasure, spent alike their precious time, their money, and even health.

Every-day employments seem tame after dissipation, and a week's neglect of school and other duties, was one of the consequences of Dunthorne Fair.

On the same day, Martha had her holiday; but it was not however spent so unwisely. She went to a distant farm-house, where she enjoyed the day in simple rural pleasures; and on the morrow, cheerful and refreshed, she commenced anew her duties.

When the two girls came to be about fifteen and sixteen years of age, their parents wished them to go to service. As Lady Marinton had promised to take them, application was made to that effect; Martha being intended for maid to the housekeeper, and Jessy, whose mother had cows and poultry, as understood, Lady Marinton remembered her promise, and agreed to receive them into her household, provided their characters bore strict inspection, especially with reference to the fair and races.

Martha, having nothing to fear, heard this with cheerfulness, but Jessy turned red with vexation, though she tossed her head, and said, partly, she supposed these were quite as many good places as Lady Marinton's to be had.

The mistress of the school, on being interrogated, could not conceal the truth that she knew Jessy to be a frequenter of all places of public amusement, especially of Dunthorne Fair; this information was quite enough, and the lady declined taking Jessy into her service. The former, who now had to seek another place, her mother being too poor to help her in idleness.

It is not intended to represent Martha as faultless; no human being is so, for we are all full of errors and imperfections, even where no great vices exist; but if we humbly try to overcome those faults, placing our trust in One who died to assure us of salvation.

"He is faithful and true to forgive us our faults, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," Martha was given to indulgence, and had a very bad habit of doing her work imperfectly, which, in a girl destined to service, is a very grave fault. The housekeeper at Lady Marinton's was, however, a strict disciplinarian, and as Martha knew her own failings, and strove earnestly to rectify them, she soon began to give satisfaction to her employers, while her sterling qualities of gentleness, meekness, truth, and honesty, her humble trust and faith in her God and Saviour, made her an example even to those far above her in worldly station. She had another great merit—she was content to fill the station in which her Creator had placed her, and was anxious only to study the duties belonging to her sphere of life, and to do them.

This is the true end of all education. Every one cannot aspire to worldly distinction, and it would produce great confusion if they did; but all can learn their duty and perform it—thus adorning the station they fill; and more cannot be done by the highest and noblest in the land. The ignorance of our present time, consists in not understanding the happiness of contentment in a humble, but improving station, which belongs to a humble, but importantly useful life, neglecting our duties, both practical, religious and moral, and in hoping for, and aspiring to, social elevation, which we are unfitted by nature and education to fill.

Jessy, who had been idle in her classes, who read badly, and wrote worse, had the idea constantly in her mind, that she should meet with what she called some great good fortune, and become a lady. Her own vanity and the injudicious flattery of thoughtless people, led her to this silly conclusion.

Martha, who was pleasing in her person, never thought for a moment of her own attractions; but Jessy, who was certainly very good-looking, never lost an opportunity to display her good looks, exposing herself to the ridicule of the sensible, and the jeers of those who were as light primed as herself. She got a place in the village, but soon left it, and went to Lorn, where she obtained a nurse-girl's situation, and there for the present we must leave her.

Martha remained at Lady Marinton's for some years, during which time she received instruction from the lady's maid in millinery and dress-making, for which she displayed great talent, and which, though she had at present, no further use for it, was serviceable in what it had hitherto cost her to have them made. At this period her mother died, and being an only

child, her father wished her to come home and keep his house for him. It was only a small agricultural labourer, but he was sober and steady, and their cottage was an abode of rustic comfort. As Martha found she had abundance of leisure, she resolved to take in dress-making work, and soon got so much, that it increased materially the comforts of her only surviving parent, and gave her confidence in the future. The habits of order and neatness she had been disciplined in at service, made her no less a little cottage superior to those of the neighbours; and where there was no hand in land with religion, there indeed it perfect peace. Simple and innocent recreations still formed her pastimes. Boisterous mirth and riotous pleasures she shunned as carefully as when she was a pupil of the village school. An evening walk in summer, a good and amusing book read out to her father by the winter fireside, these formed occupations for her leisure moments, as agreeable as they were instructive.

What peace and real happiness result from well-spent lives, what misery and guilt spring from the thirst for unlawful pleasures, the danger of a several duties and obligations! The difference between two such lives will presently be shown.

In happiness and fear of God, Martha's aged father lived his days out, and at length peacefully slept in the Lord, blessing with his last breath his dutiful and good daughter. Dear young girls, no wealth, no worldly honours, can bestow the deep, heartfelt comfort and joy which those know who have earned and inherited a parent's blessing. Nothing is like it; and Martha felt sorrowful if, even while she grieved for her loss. She had no other consolation, and with the aid of a young apprentice she gathered a thriving business, working even occasionally for Lady Marinton, her former mistress, and that lady's daughters. Mary a young man in the village, wished to obtain favour in the eyes of the young village dressmaker, but she seemed in no hurry to change a condition, which, if hard working, was still a happy one.

One bleak and bitter evening in February, Martha, having worked till it was no longer light, despatched her little apprentice on an errand. The girl came in presently, breathless; "There is a poor woman, mistress," she cried, "dying, I believe, of cold and hunger in the lane yonder; not an old woman—quite young, like you."

"Poor creature," Martha replied; "fetch me some elder wine, Sissan, and give me my shawl—I will go and see what is the matter; and, listen—if I should call for you, come to me with the warm wine."

She walked rapidly to the place, where, lying within the shadow of a doorway, the wan form of a woman was visible. Some of the village children stood gazing on this poor sufferer, two or three of them gawping and others, with a more offering of sympathy of any kind. Some passengers had stopped and looked, and crossed over to the other side. It remained for Martha to be the good Samaritan, who should rescue this poor creature from the cold and the hunger to which she was a victim. She gently lifted the poor woman's head, and poured a little milk down her throat; presently she began to revive, but was much too weak to be able to rise and walk even so far as Martha's house. She murmured some faint words of blessing in her prayer, who called now to the apprentice to bring the wine; and the warmth of the spiced drink soon put a little strength into the limbs of the miserable creature.

Thus she was led to the house of her pre-er, who prepared her own bed for the sufferer, without even an enquiry as to her name and history. Martha had always before her eyes the example of One who pitied sinners, even while He rebuked sin; besides, she justly considered that she had no right to imagine that, because poor and destitute, this poor woman was therefore sinful. She determined first to administer to her pressing bodily necessities, and then, if needful, to examine into her spiritual welfare. When a good fire had been kindled, and a steaming plate came to the features of the sick person, Martha started with horror and dismay—the name of her former playmate escaped her—"Jessy!" she cried—"No, it is not possible—I must be mistaken." The sound of her own name aroused the miserable creature, but she had previously recognised Martha, though she trusted that she herself might not be known. Shame in her, was indeed enough to bring repentance; and while receiving benefits from one whom she had formerly despised, she could not avoid a feeling of envy at the difference in their fates; a difference he remembered, brought about solely by self-guidance and self-conduct. There is, indeed, an especial Providence exercised by the good God over

all his creatures, but in placing before us evil and good, we have still the power of choosing which we will be. Rightly has it been said, that conduct is fate. Misfortune and sorrow may pursue the good, but they are never decreed; and though hidden by dark clouds for a time, the mists will presently dissipate, and the sun of righteousness stream over the sufferer, shedding its radiance over all things, and turning the darkness into golden light.

Jessy, then, had made her own fate. Giddy and imprudent, she had procured a place in London, and one where unfortunately the mistress exercised no supervision over her servants. All her wages were spent in gaudy dress; all her aims were directed to attract attention, and in this she succeeded to well. Attractive in person, she soon fell a victim to arts superior to her own. She had many acquaintances of her own sex, even more worthless, and certainly more depraved, than herself. To deceive her mistress—to steal out at night when supposed to be in bed, and then to partake of gaily and unlawful pleasures, was a principal part of this misguided girl's career. She was found out at last, and instantly dismissed from her service—dismissed peacefully, forfeiting at once both home and character.

Among the disorderly and improper acquaintances she had made in London, there was a private soldier who, even in barracks, had obtained an evil reputation. This man, by name Joseph Ellison, had offered himself as a sutor to Jessy, who had at first turned away from his advances, but who, gradually ensnared by the evil company with whom she mixed, was now glad to obtain the name of wife even from such a man. They were married, and the consequences of such an union soon showed themselves. Jessy was made a drudge, and, as she resisted, and, moreover, was continually gadding about in search of idle pleasures, she was treated with severity, and even beat. Her violent and disorderly conduct made no attempt to reclaim either herself or him. She became a slattern, and even indulged in ardent liquors whenever she could get them. A soldier's wife has need of becoming industrious and clever, if she would live comfortably. At first, Jessy took to washing, but she lost all her customers as fast as she got them, so great was her carelessness—so unskillful her work, that at length Joseph Ellison's regiment was ordered to India; and only a certain number of the men's wives were selected to go, but she was rejected. Her disorderly conduct, her want of cleanliness, and her pert tongue, prejudiced every officer against her. She was left behind, and Private Ellison testified no great grief at his loss. Worse, she was left destitute, as are many of the poor wives of soldiers; none of these, however, are honest, industrious women—but Jessy, good looking, idle, self-bred,—her fate may soon be read. After her husband's departure she sank gradually in vice and misery, too shocking to portray in these pages. At last came sickness, which made her pause in her mad career; and then, when discharged from the hospital which had formed her sole shelter, a weary longing came over her for her native village, where she fancied those who knew her formerly might shelter her and give her employment. To beg her way to Dunthorne was now her only resource, for she had not a penny, and scarcely clothes fitted to shelter her from the inclemency of the weather. She succeeded in reaching her native place, but, as she believed, only to die there. From this fate her early companion, Martha, relieved her. The kind girl, who more deeply interested when she found that the traveller was her schoolmate, attended her, watched her day and night, and wept and prayed over her. Even the hard and callous heart of Jessy softened under the love and benevolence of Martha; the latter, who could not fail to understand, from Jessy's narratives, how sad had been her career, struck earnestly to impress the wretched young woman with the lessons which alone could bring her to a new life, to the feet of the Saviour whom she scorned and ignored. Although at first she turned away from all serious conversation with something like disgust, yet Martha, at last, hoped that the traces of her past levity had disappeared not easily to return. As for employment, that question was easily disposed of—for as Martha's business daily increased, she could give Jessy quite sufficient work with the needle, to keep her hands busy and comfortable.

Work too, which Jessy, who had always been handy with her needle, could do quite well, and for which at first she possessed to be grateful. But Martha had another trial to undergo. The village gossips shook their heads when they found Jessy domesticated under Martha's roof, and predicted that no good would come of it. They averred that her neglect and

silence had broken her mother's heart. And once or two stragglers from London had told how they had met Jessy, and in what company. Some doubted her marriage, but she soon set all those doubts at rest by showing her certificate; she felt herself triumphant there, but wise folk shook their heads again, as they said, a woman might disgrace her husband as well as her parents. Nothing but Martha's own exemplary character could have saved even herself from censure, but the purity of her motives never once was called in question, nor the earnestness of her efforts to win Jessy back into the straight and open path.

It is to be feared that envy had some share in Jessy's apparent reformation. She beheld the great respect and affection entertained by nearly every one for Martha, and she aspired to be treated in the same way: she wore now a studied solemnity of manner, which imposed on the shallow observer, but which resembled the sedate cheerfulness of Martha as little as night does the bright and open morning. Her still handsome person attracted towards her many of the young men in the village, and many a time she bewailed her ill fate in being married, so that her luck in life was marred.

The idle and the vicious in the village were not backward in renewing their acquaintance with Jessy,—they endeavoured to visit her; but Martha, who possessed firmness and good sense, as well as piety and humanity, interfered.

"I cannot have these people here," she said to Jessy; "my character is all I have in the world, and to be known as the acquaintance of such persons would be ruin."

And Jessy wept, and said how hard it was to depend on charity, and be a slave; but when Martha quietly told her she was free to choose for herself, she saw her ways about her, said she could never bear to leave so good a friend.

She saw these acquaintances afterwards only by stealth, but she did see them, proving thereby how little her heart was converted, though her interest made her conform to ways and habits which, in her heart, she still derided and sneered at.

Piety is a fearful vice. Open crime is more easily subdued and arrived at, but that sin is deep in the heart, and never is root and branch out.

Dunthorne still had its fairs and races, and with returning health and spirits, Jessy began to feel her old cravings after what she called pleasure.

She broached the subject openly to Martha one day:—

"I should like," she said, "to peep at the fair." Martha looked up in mild astonishment.

"I should have thought, Jessy," she replied, "that you had seen the evil of those places long since, too much, to wish to frequent them again."

"Oh, you mean because I made a bad marriage, and—"

"I mean, my dear Jessy, because you were led terribly astray, even from your girlhood, by a love of such places; remember you lost Lady Mariton's place through that—had you stayed in Dunthorne, how different might have been your lot."

But Jessy said that all that happened had been her fate.

Martha gently denied this, and said that God placed our fate in a great measure in our own hands, and that we must answer to Him for the use we made of the opportunities given us. "You have now, dear Jessy," she said, "one, bestowed again to keep in the right way, if you do not swerve from it; therefore, pray avail all opportunities of temptation, seek them not, and all will be well; remember, that of ourselves we have no strength, and that we are not, the best of us, strong to resist evil, especially when it comes in forms most pleasing to us."

Jessy made no reply; in her own heart she called Martha a preacher, and determined, if possible, to satisfy her secretly, by longing to taste once more of worldly amusement. She had been sobered by her misfortunes, but not reformed. The heart was still what it had ever been, in her gayest, gliddest days.

On the morning of the fair-day, she pleaded violent headache, as an excuse for not rising at her usual hour. She knew that Martha and the apprentice were both obliged to go to Mariton Hall to take new orders, and so to assist in making up some evening dresses; she therefore, laid her plans accordingly. Martha having visited her, and brought some tea, expressed regret at being forced to be absent, and placed within Jessy's reach everything she supposed her to want. Many a heart would have been touched with such proofs of love and confidence, but Jessy's, unphilly, was not that heart. Her deceptive nature rejoiced at the success of her

stratagem, and no sooner had Martha and her little apprentice departed, than Jessy jumped nimbly out of bed, washed and dressed herself in the good Sunday clothes with which her benefactress had supplied her, and then she left the cottage, without even the precaution of locking it up. "I shall be back," she said to herself, "before Martha comes home; I know she will stay at the Hall till evening." She had a little money—savings which Martha had implored her to make; and now, once more, behold her, forgetful of all she had suffered through her former sins, intent only on visiting a scene of boisterous mirth, and rude licence. It was not long before she espied several of her evil companions. A party was made to visit some of the booths, and quickly she was immersed in the vortex of vain and profitless pleasures. It grew dusk before she gave a thought to home, or the too confiding Martha; and when she did, and mentioned her wish to return, she was taunted with being the slave of a meddling moralist. Flushed with the strong ale with which they had regaled themselves, she resented this, and a quarrel presently ensued between herself and the girl who thus twitted her. Words came first—blows next—and soon the whole party were taken into custody, for obstructing the fair, and for riotous behaviour. This sobered Jessy. In a moment all her hopes of fair character were gone for ever; a few hours with bad company had more power to taint her of the pale of virtue and sobriety. She was locked up the whole night, and in the morning taken before a magistrate; she was fined to an extent which took the whole of many weeks' savings. She was also whidly disgraced; and, to crown all, there stood Martha, with sorrowful looks, and downcast eyes, not wishing to upbraid, but evidently not knowing what to say or do. It was now a duty to herself, and one which she saw her own character demanded, to deny any further abode under her roof to the misguided creature, who, with her soiled and torn attire, her discoloured hair and stained face, stood there an example, to be shunned and avoided.

"Jessy," Martha began, "I am very sorry—"

"There, you need say no more. I do not want to be preached to; I am tired of it already."

"What will you do now—where will you go? Oh! Jessy, I am wretched, I give you no trial more, if you could but be trusted. We should forgive even unto seventy times seven—yet—"

"Don't distress yourself, I shall find a home, I dare say. I can work as I have done; I am strong—I"—she stopped, shame came just then, and whispered who had given her strength—work—all. She burst into tears. Martha hailed them gladly.

"Dear Jessy," she said, taking her hand, "be comforted. I can still give you work out to do; you can take a cheap room—you see—I should lose every friend I have if I took you in again, and character is my bread. Come, be comforted, all is not yet lost."

But the wretched girl motioned her away—she closed her ears to the words of peace, of love, of charity and hope; and when Martha persisted in her well-meant efforts, she showered upon her a volley of abuse, in words that made the gentle and Christian young woman shrink in terror and awe, from her violence and depravity. She could do no more. She could but pray that the stony heart might be turned—the depraved will made to submit in time.

Jessy was left to herself. It should here be stated, that her mother had died during those evil days passed by the daughter in London—died in poverty and grief. Did no thought of that poor mother arise to turn the wayward creature to remorse? None. How she got her living henceforth was a mystery—sometimes in the fields—sometimes in houses, hold labour,—but Jessy was always to be found in those places where dissipation was going on; and might be met, in the bold, brawling, and, to say a word, at harvest feasts and fairs,—all trace of her former beauty gone—to be seen no more. *

Two years passed. Martha had become the wife of a thriving young farmer, and was reaping, in domestic happiness and love, the fruits of her former good conduct; when one day a woman came in quite to Mrs. Thomas at the farm, to say, a woman who was dying in Dunthorne workhouse, begged to speak with her.

"Who is the woman?" said Martha. "Do I know her? Not that it matters much; if I can do the poor soul any good I will go with pleasure, but my husband does not like me to be out of the way, and—"

"I don't know who she is," answered the messenger,

"But she says she cannot die till she sees Martha Thomas, and we reckon, mistress, that is you."
 "Well, I will return with you," said Martha, putting on her neat bonnet and cloak, and following the woman, who led the way to Dunthorne workhouse, which was about two miles distant from Farmer Thomas's.

On a bed, in the sick ward of this establishment, lay the wreck of what had once been Jessy Rydale. Her arms were wildly tossed about in an agony, that evidently was but the preludio of death. Martha was stricken to the heart—her innocent childhood, their youth, and the sad difference between their maturity, faded on her as she beheld so terrible a sight. She breathed a silent prayer that she might be of use in this crisis.

"Dear Jessy," she said, "I grieve to see you so ill. Have you seen a clergyman?"

"No—no—no," said the sufferer, vehemently. "I want no one, none but you, Martha—what must I do to be saved? The time is short. I cannot pray—you pray for me. Oh! God, have mercy!"

Martha bent her head down to the poor creature's ear. This was the end of selfish pleasure then. "If you believe in a Saviour, He," she said, "is all powerful to save you, even now—so you but repent. It is a bad thing, Jessy, to leave all to the last, but His mercy has no limits. He can stretch forth His hand even now, and save you from the gulf which yawns. Dear sister, are you sincerely repentant?"

"Yes, yes—oh! that I had my time to come again—oh! that I had lived with you, lived like you!"

She wept then, and Martha hailed those tears as a promise of pardon and redemption. "I am an erring mortal, Jessy, like yourself. Yet I feel persuaded God has sent me as an instrument to snatch you from that eternal death suffered by the impenitent and hardened."

A shadow passed over the face of the dying woman.

"Who says," she asked huskily, "who says I am hardened?"

"Nay, I trust not. Oh! Jessy, the moments are fleeting. Think of One who suffered even death that His unthankful children might live."

"But—I—I—"and the wretched woman gasped the words in horror—"I have never thought of Him, never cared for His ways. I have hardened my heart—oh! Martha, pray for me. I cannot pray for myself. I have never prayed since we went to the village school. Do you know how I got my death-blow? The man I married came into these parts a little while ago. He had deserted from his regiment—and—and—I was maddened, stung by his taunts—I went and gave information. He rushed at me when he was taken, and gave me a blow that caused the illness which laid me here. He called me Judas—Judas—"

Her senses began to wander now, and fearful were the ravings which Martha Thomas was condemned to hear. Jessy could no longer comprehend the voice of love which called on her to trust in the unfailing Righteousness. She had left all till the eleventh hour, and time was passing. Yet even now mercy was vouchsafed her. Delay was granted. She slept at last—slept, deep and long, awaking from her slumbers calm, composed, but sinking fast. Her frame of mind was altered even; she spoke resignedly of her coming dissolution, and desired those around would pray for her—holding Martha's hand fast in hers while she did so. Martha had only left the dying woman for a time, and had returned again to witness the closing scene.

Penitent at last, trusting that her sins would be washed clean through the blood of her Saviour, Jessy died, a warning and an example to those who, like her, love this world better than the immortal hopes given us by One who never fails to those who love Him, nor even to those who turn from their evil ways, and seek at last His rest.

Still, dear young friends, be warned, and think of these things in due time. Leave not the concerns of your immortal welfare to the latest hour and minute of your life. You know in temporal affairs the evils of procrastination; how, then, can you put off those things which concern eternity itself? Pleasure hardens the heart, and converts it into stone, as

regards God and heavenly things; yet its fruits are even as the dust to which the apples of the Dead Sea turn when held to the lips of the parched and fainting wanderer. You see, in the result of the two lives here portrayed, the effects, on the one hand, of unwise indulgence in vain amusements; on the other, of the peace and happiness to which virtuous practices and well regulated principles lead.

DAILY WORRIES: HOW TO MAKE THE BEST OF THEM.—Now we may lay it down as a general rule with regard to little troubles and annoyances, that we make the best of them when we make the least of them. Nothing can be more foolish or unprofitable than to be always thinking of and examining into our worries, looking at them through magnifying glasses.

The Bible.

BEHOLD, how fair of eye, and mild of mien,
 Walks forth of morning gentle golden queen;
 What chaste sobriety virtue'er she speaks,
 What glad content sits smiling on her cheeks,
 What plans of goodness in that bosom glow,
 What prudent care is throned upon her brow,
 What tender truth in all she does or says,
 What pleasantness and peace in all her ways!
 For ever blooming on that cheerful face
 Home's best affections grow divine in grace;
 Her eyes are ray'd with love, serene and bright;
 Charity breathes her lips with smiles of light;
 Her kindly voice hath music in its notes;
 And Heaven's own atmosphere around her floats!

HOME.

HOME, happy word, dear England's ancient boast,
 Thon strongest castle on her sea-girt coast,
 Thon full fair name for comfort, love, and rest,
 Haven of refuge found and peace possess'd,
 Oasis in the desert, star of light
 Spangling the dreary dark of this world's night,
 All-hallow'd spot of angel-trodden ground,
 Where Jacob's ladder plants its lowest round,
 Imperial realm midst the slavish world,
 Where Freedom's banner ever floats unfurled,
 Fair island of the blest, earth's richest wealth,
 Her plague-struck body's little all of health,—
 Home, gentle name, I vow thee to my song.
 To thee my praise, to thee my prayers belong;
 Inspire me with thy beauty, bid me theme
 With gracious musings worthy of my theme!
 Spirit of Love, the soul of Home thou art,
 Fan with vivest thoughts my kindling heart;
 Spirit of Power, in prayers thine aid I ask,
 Uphold me, bless me to my holy task;
 Spirit of Truth, guide thou my wayward wing;
 Love, Power, and Truth, be with me while I sing.

MARTIN F. TUPPER.

TO YOUNG WOMEN.—We wish to say a word to you, young women, about your influence over young men. Did you ever think of it? Did you ever realize that you could have any influence at all over them? You believe that a young woman by her constant, consistent, Christian example, may exert an untold power. You do not know the respect and almost worship which young men, no matter how wicked they may be themselves, pay to a consistent Christian lady, be she young or old. A gentleman once said to a lady who boarded in the same house with him, that her life was a constant proof of the Christian religion. Often the simple request of a lady will keep a young man from doing wrong. We have known this to be the case very frequently, and young men have been kept from swearing just because a lady whom they respected, and for whom they had an affection, requested it. A tract given, an invitation to go to church, a request that your friend would read the Bible daily, will often be regarded, when a more powerful appeal from other sources would fall unheeded upon his heart. Many of the gentlemen whom you meet in society are away from the influence of parents and sisters, and they will respond to any interest taken in their welfare. We all speak of a young man's danger from evil associates, and the very influence which his dissipated male associates have over him. We believe it is all true that a man's character is formed, to a great extent, by the women that he associates with before he becomes a complete man of the world.

The British Workwoman, OUT AND AT HOME. SEPTEMBER, 1865.

"I BELIEVE THAT ANY IMPROVEMENT WHICH COULD BE BROUGHT TO BEAR ON THE MOTHERS, WOULD EFFECT A GREATER AMOUNT OF GOOD THAN ANYTHING THAT HAS YET BEEN DONE."—*Earl Shaftesbury.*

THE RELATIVE DUTIES OF MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS.

THERE is a beautiful story in the Book, always a favourite with the mothers and daughters who are conversant with it—a story of wonderful

love between a mother and daughter; all the more wonderful because it was not a tie of blood. Ruth's pathetic address to her mother-in-law, than which one more tenderly impressed has never been spoken, remains on record, to show what should be the strength of the bond between mother and daughter. A more beautiful illustration it is not possible to find. One scarcely knows which to admire the most,—the generous self-denial of Naomi, who strove to persuade her daughter to leave her, though she was the light of her own desolate home; or the earnest devotion of Ruth, who cried "Entreat me not to leave thee; where thou goest I will go, where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried."

May we say a few words to Mothers and Daughters respecting the imitation of the noble traits in their character of these Bible women? And we would do so with all love and gentleness, knowing the frailties of human nature, and being convinced, by experience, what a hard thing it is to "be said to do the right." We have all our tempers, we have all our natural dispositions, and sometimes in the close companionships of home, our peculiarities rub against those of others; and we do not always take the trouble to resist. We are not always anxious, as we certainly should be, that those who know us best, should form the highest opinions of us.

Is it not so, daughters, at home? Are there never times when you have spent a pleasant evening among friends, and come home over-tired, pouring upon your mother all the irritability and fretfulness which have been controlled before company. Still you know, and will admit to yourselves, that your mother deserves this at your hands less than any one beside. Better be peevish with all your friends than with her who loves you more than all you can ever know—who nursed you in her bosom, whose nights were broken by your fitful cries, and who gave them, and all else, willingly up because of her unbounded tenderness for her child.

Do you always realise this? Do you feel your mother to be your very best friend—the one to whom you turn in joy or sorrow for sympathy, and to whom you confide your troubles and pleasures, whose advice and guidance you seek and value more than all others? Oh, daughters of British Workwomen, never be you among the number who seek to hide the knowledge of their pursuits from her who has a God-given right to know everything that concerns them. Never say to your companions, "Don't tell mother,"—it is one of the worst sentences you can utter. Tell her all—be candid, be open, be thoroughly truthful to your mother. Never deceive her, if you would be either safe or happy.

And if we might make another suggestion, it

would be, devote yourselves to your mothers. Surely you are not in the habit of leaving her alone every evening, with the thousand wants of the younger children, while you are away enjoying an evening walk? Does it not, at least, sometimes occur to you that, perhaps, she would like a walk too? Do you ever think how weary she must get of the sight of the four walls bounding in her life?—she may seem contented and cheerful, but, depend upon it, she needs a walk every whit as much as her daughter does. Then, now and then, when you have an interesting book, supposing one night a week you were to offer to read it to her, instead of walking out with Charles. We are sure that the readers of the **BRITISH WORKWOMAN** do not always keep the easy chair when their mother is in the room,—do not mind taking a pair of little socks to mend, to ease those dear, tired eyes,—never forget to jump up and open a door, when, laden with things, the mother passes out.

All these are little things, but little things make up the sum of human life, and a great deal depends upon them.

Then, may we say a word to mothers, also? It is not well to be too harsh upon young follies. You have grey hairs upon your temples, but they are still in the giddy age. Do not expect too much from them; they cannot be old and very sober yet. Take pleasantly any little sacrifices they may make, never allowing them to pass unnoticed, or with only a sullen recognition. Try—and we know how pushed you are for time, and how hard it is to be delicate and tender in such cases—but try and enter into their pursuits,—let them bring their friends home sometimes, and entertain them kindly—do not sneer at their loves and friendships, however foolish you may deem them. A kindly word, a mother's kiss, an affectionate look, may do much good to those whom you love as your own life.

There is generally not too much expression of love between mother and daughter. There is nothing to call forth the out-spokenness of Ruth and Naomi. And so there gets a carelessness of manner, an absence of the loving tones, which should every day be rendered. There are pleasant customs,—such as the observance of birthdays, upon which some little present is made, and some extra kindly words spoken,—and the good night and good morning kiss,—the prayer at the family altar,—during which, sometimes, the mother takes the daughter's hand in her own,—these are all strong concentrating things, binding heart to heart.

For, after all, the best kind of mothers and daughters are those who are sincere Christians.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

FOR about three years of His earthly life, our Saviour went about preaching, and doing many wonderful works. But his sermons were very unlike the exhortations to be heard in the Synagogue; in fact, in the common meaning attached to the word preaching, he never preached at all. He talked. He took His text sometimes from a fisherman's net; sometimes from a flowery hedge side; sometimes from chirping sparrows in the trees; sometimes from a field of corn ripe for the sickle—at all times He addressed Himself to the hearts of those who heard Him, and made religion a thing of every-day life, and not a robe to be worn only on Sabbath and holidays.

Among the beautiful narratives introduced by our

Saviour into His discourses, there is none more beautiful nor more capable of practical application than that of the good Samaritan.

Jesus had been telling his hearers that they should love and care for others as they loved and cared for themselves; it was the summary of the last six Commandments—our duty towards our neighbour. One of His hearers asked "Who is my neighbour?" and the answer was given in the parable.

A traveller on a lonely road is stopped by highwaymen, robbed, half-murdered, and left alone to perish. The unhappy man, one would say, should have excited the pity and won the help of any passer-by. But two men, at different times—the one a priest, whose office should have taught him charity; the other a Levite—see him, and render no help, but leave him to die. Those who thus leave him are virtually his own brethren—and if from them he receives no assistance, how can he expect it from strangers? But it is a stranger who helps him. The poor dying Jew is saved by a Samaritan. Yet the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans, and counted them as dogs. The Samaritan stops on his journey, hazards the risk of himself being attacked, endures fatigue, spends his money, accepts responsibility for a stranger—a Jew—one of the race by whom he is himself despised.

Who is my neighbour? Why, every living soul on earth—every one—foe or friend—intimate or alien—for all it is ours to care, and to render the measure of help which God enables us to render.

The charity which begins at home too often ends there. That home has the first claim it is true, but



THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

then outside our homes we have claims upon us not to be neglected or forgotten. We must lend the helping hand, whenever we can; and be sure of this, that those who help others shall themselves be helped.

Our engraving represents the Samaritan taking leave of the wounded man, and furnishing the tavern-keeper with the necessary funds for the invalid's stay in his house. J. T.

THE HARSHIPS OF SERVICE, AND HOW TO MEET THEM.

PART IV.

BESIDES the real trials of service, there are those that servants, wrongfully, imagine to be such.

Some girls are silly enough to think it a great hardship if they are made to do their work properly. They don't see the use of people being so "faddy," and can't bear being looked after, as if they knew no better than a child; and so they will throw away their opportunities of improvement, and give up a good situation for the very reason that ought to make them glad to keep it. Others think it a great unkindness that they are not allowed to go to pleasure-fairs, dances, shows, or Sunday parties; whereas, if their mistress were to permit it, it would only show that she had very little care for their best interests.

Again, others consider it a great hardship if they are required to dress in a manner becoming to their

station. They can afford a smart bonnet, or parasol, they say, and why should they not do as they please with their own money.

But for servants to spend their wages in useless folly, not only prevents them from laying by against the time of sickness and old age, or may be, adding to the comforts of an aged parent, but is a positive hindrance to them in their path of life, inasmuch as it proclaims to everyone the vanity and folly of their disposition. Therefore, if when your mistress gives you your wages, she advises you to lay some of it out in good and useful clothing, and to put the rest in the Post Office Savings' Bank, do not set that down as a grievance, and think that because the money is yours and you have earned it, it is no concern of hers how you spend it. It is a business of hers, and one respecting which she must give account to God, in all things to see to the well-doing of her servants; and the time may yet come, when from your very heart you will thank her for her watchful care over you.

Again, do not think it a grievance if you are told to do a certain thing at a particular time, when you have set your mind on doing something else. Your mistress may, or may not, have good reasons for what she tells you to do—most likely she has, though she may not give them to you. But, at all events, your duty is the same, and unless you are desired to do what is positively wrong, you have no right to sit in judgment on the wisdom or propriety of her orders. You may think your own way the best, and be tempted still to follow it out, but that is not to be a good servant,—for the first duty of such is to be obedient.

It belongs of necessity to the position in which you have of your own accord placed yourself. You would think it very wrong, and justly so, if your mistress were not to give you your wages punctually, or neglect to provide you with proper food and lodging; but you must remember your claim to this depends on your rightly performing the duties that you have taken on yourself. If you neglect these when your mistress's eye is not on you, if you are deceitful or dishonest, idle or disobedient, you are not fulfilling your part of your engagement with her, and have therefore only yourself to thank if you incur her displeasure.

Do not, then, be so unwise as to magnify every little vexation into a hardship; and, especially, I would entreat you to guard against the approaches to sin. It is scarcely possible to commit a single wrong action. One fault is almost sure to lead to another. Falsehood follows in the track of idleness and disobedience; the indulgence of wrongful curiosity frequently induces covetousness—and this, dishonesty; while a bold and defiant behaviour too often prepares the way to greater sin.

If, for instance, you are a *housemaid*, when you are cleaning the drawing-room, you perhaps see letters left about, and are tempted to indulge your curiosity in reading them—or you think you will just take "one peep" at the books you find on the table—but after this one peep, it is very hard indeed to put the book down, and go on with your dusting. And so your mistress comes down and finds the room not ready; and you possibly are tempted to invent a falsehood to excuse yourself. When you are at your work upstairs, your eye may be caught by the sight of an open drawer, and you think it no great harm to explore its contents. This may make you wish for what is not yours, a little bit off that ribbon you think will never be missed, and it would just match a piece you have got.

At present, you would, I dare say, shrink from taking any loose silver that may chance to be lying about, but if you once allow yourself to take anything that does not belong to you—even this may soon become easy, and where will you then stop?—for the downward path is such an easy one to tread!

Perhaps, however, you are a *cook* or *housekeeper*. In that case your position is one of great trust. You have not only to guard against waste and extravagance yourself, but to endeavour to prevent it in others; and if you are found unfaithful, you have much to answer for. You may be tempted to

entertain your friends and relations (or those of your fellow-creants), at your master's expense; to give away provisions, &c., in exchange for services done to yourself. You any think it hard not to share the delicacies that you have to prepare for others, and be induced to secrete a portion for your own use. If it be your business to buy butter, cheese, groceries, &c., or settle bills, there are again many temptations to dishonesty. If not the actual taking of money that does not belong to you, you may suffer yourself to be induced by dishonourable tradespeople to deal with them to your master's disadvantage, on the promise of a consideration for yourself. In fact, there are endless ways in which a cook is tempted to be deceitful or dishonest, and Eye ever watching her, spying out all her ways, and how can she escape the scrutiny of Him to whom the darkness and the light are both alike?

It may be, however, that you are not cook or housemaid, but nurse, and so all this has nothing to do with you. Yet do not put the paper down quite yet, for we want to say a few words to you as well. Difficulties and temptations, your daily experience, and we should like, if we can, to help you to see our way through them.

The children that you have the care of have positively been so indulged and allowed to have their own way, that you find yourself quite unable to make them mind you. If you tell them not to do a thing, they only seem more determined to do it; if you are vexed or angry, they laugh; if you punish them, you displease your mistress. You are thus tempted to indulge them in hurtful or forbidden things; and to screen yourself from blame, perhaps, tell them to "be sure and say nothing about it." This habit of concealment is a fault that nurses are very apt to fall into. Yet it is what they ought most especially to guard against, for the consequences of it are most ruinous to the children that are under their care. Many a once healthy child has been crippled for life, doomed to drag on a helpless and miserable existence, from a hurt or fall which his nurse had first carelessly caused and then blamably concealed. Many a one, with a mind framed for high and noble things, has been robbed of his birthright, and through the blunders of the prey of insidious temptations, and the false fears which his nurse used to frighten him into goodness. But worse, far worse, than the ruin of body or mind, is the ruin of the heart. And, alas! how often have the first lessons of deceit and hypocrisy been learnt in the nursery. False excuses and specious lies have been put into the child's mouth by his nurse, in order to hide his and her faults; and is it any wonder, if his manhood has become like his boyhood—a hollow pretence.

It is a grievous mistake to spoil children; it is cruel to be harsh and unkind to them; but the greatest harm of all that you can do them, is to be untruthful. I know that it is not easy always to be open and straightforward with children; and the readiest way to ask tiresome questions, and the readiest way to satisfy them is to give them an untrue or evasive answer. But it is a very wrong way. Children should not be accustomed to expect all their questions to be answered. It is often better to refuse kindly but firmly, than to tell them what they ask.

Then, again, it seems such an easy way of getting children to be good, to promise or threaten them; and you may be apt to do this, without considering whether you really mean, or will be able, to keep your word; but, remember, the surest way to make children obey and respect you, is always to do what you say you will do.

By firmness and kindness, the most stubborn disposition may almost always be overcome in the end. It may at first be very uphill work; you may have many difficulties to contend with, but do not try to escape these by wrong methods. If you have a headstrong, headstrong, and baby is more than usually noisy, do not give her a dose of "children's quietness," for by this means you may do her an immense mischief. Rather endeavour, by gentle love and patient self-forgetfulness, to gain the hearts of the little ones, and then they will of themselves try not to be a worry to you.

The practical lesson, then, that we have to learn from all this is—to beware of the beginnings of evil. Not so much to fear hardships as to fear sin; not so much to try and escape from hardship, as to bear it bravely, and this not resting on our own strength, but in reliance on Him who has said, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not."

"Waste not—want not."

WOMEN'S WORK IN STAFFORDSHIRE.

STAFFORDSHIRE is part of the back-bone of England—near the centre of the land. Its industries chiefly require grit and stern labour, along with experience and skill. Females might be, therefore, naturally, expected to occupy a higher place in Staffordshire than in the counties celebrated for the clothing trades. Its population contains more men than women, and the wages of the former are comparatively high, bearing some proportion to the peculiar nature of the work. Still the condition of many female operatives in this great county is deplorable, and from the nature of their employment cannot be easily improved. Female labour in collieries is illegal, yet females are employed on the pit-banks in all the mining districts, including Staffordshire. The labour is rough and severe; the company is often objectionable, and the results pernicious. It is unwomanly work. Even the pitmen of Laneshire females engaged on the pit-banks are undomestic. Their morals frequently become debased, and those females in this occupation who desire to live creditably and uprightly, are exposed to more than the corrupting influences of example and language; to more than evil persuasion—as recent cases in some of the mining districts have shown.

Nearly one thousand females are employed on the pit-banks of Staffordshire; but a far greater number are engaged on the equally disagreeable, rough and unseemly work of Staffordshire is divided into North and South, and both divisions are engaged in mining; in iron blasting and casting; puddling and rolling, and in the various manufactures connected with the iron, and part of these forming the hardware trade. Both North and South have manufactories of glass and earthenware, and sell and use the dinner and tea tables of high and low, over half the world. The pottery business is now brought under the Factory Act, and many injurious practices have been discontinued or modified; and some security is afforded for education and for moderate hours of labour; but several processes are deemed unhealthy, although the general appearance of the female operatives in the Pottery towns does not justify the statement occasionally made on that subject. A short residence in them would, alas, certainly not confine to a casual observer the reported immorality said, in recent publications, to be prevalent there. On the contrary, the population seem to be more intelligent and respectable than those of many country towns unconnected with manufactures and trade. These Pottery towns have a superabundance of beer and gin shops, and some of the latter have music rooms attached, with nominal "Professors" from Italy, and vocalists who, according to the placards, must be "misses" in London, yet Burslem, Hanley, and Tunstall are orderly and quiet places, which leave a favourable impression on the mind of a visitor.

Dudley is not so much a manufacturing town, as the heart of a group; and yet its narrow lanes are partly occupied by small, badly built shops, with three or four forges in each, and females at work in them. The female operatives are generally engaged in chain or nail-making, but some of them are occupied on locks or other articles of hardware. These occupations are not of good house-keeping, than many other less violent exercises in which females are compelled to labour and live. One young girl may carry from the store to the shop a half ewt. bundle of iron rods, on her shoulder or head—in the latter case with a straw bonnet dangling in her hand—while the handle rods seems more remarkable, in addition to the difference of weight. Perhaps the physical exercise of hammering red hot iron, on a small anvil, for an indefinite number of hours daily, may be less disadvantageous—although it appears less natural than the common and confined labour of the seamstress. Chain and nail-making are carried on to a large extent in Cradley and the Ley. A great majority of the chain-makers and nailers in these places have small shops, with three or four forges, attached to their dwelling-houses, and female nailers are often engaged along with their relatives. It is difficult to form any accurate estimate of their numbers, as they are scattered over the country, among its towns and villages.

In the immediate neighbourhood of Cradley and Ley, and surrounding these places, from three to four thousand females live by making nails, and seven thousand in "the black country" probably follow that trade. An active man will not clear more than

fifteen shillings weekly at this business, while boys and females earn less money; yet we regret that a proposal to reduce these earnings has led to all the comparative idleness, arising from a comparatively idle summer. As this business is generally carried on at home, it does not interfere with the acquisition of some knowledge in household occupations; but it has no fixed hours, and in the absence of regularity in this respect half-holidays are averaged by other days of labour, stretched out to the farthest limits of strength and time.

The dwelling-houses in the iron district are almost exclusively built of brick, as are the blast furnaces, that resemble small pyramids, scattered over the country, throwing out fire and smoke, like perpetual volcanoes; and the puddling furnaces grouped together in detachments of thirty to forty; and the huge chimneys that occasionally stand like sentinels, and in other quarters dot the land in groups of two or three; while the long lines of road, that link town to town, have pavements of brick; and thus the production of common decorative, and of fire bricks, forms a large part of the local Staffordshire trade. These clay-works also turn out pipes and tubes for agricultural and other purposes, of a mile or two at night, in a short time, stretched round the world. They require many operatives who have not the advantage of any factory law. Many of them are females, and hundreds of little girls, who should be running to or from school, or playing on the green sward,—tramp in summer or winter, cold or hot, dry or wet, over twenty, in some cases thirty miles of heavy soil, carrying burdens of half-finished material. As they grow up, they are advanced to other processes of the trade. The labour is so unwholesome that an on-looker could not easily distinguish, by their dress, between the men and women engaged in this work. According to the Government Inspector, who has examined the circumstances connected with these manufactories of clay goods, the morality of the female operatives is questionable. He advances many flagrant examples of extreme ignorance and vice; and his opinions are confirmed from other sources. The character of the employment, and the upbringing of the people, supply great facilities for vice, and equally great obstructions to virtue. We do not allege, and facts by no means prove, that this class are all more tainted than other classes; but the vast numbers of the employment are so situated, in a most disadvantageous position, likely to produce many scandals. These objectionable circumstances are not, like the severe toil, inseparable from the business; for, while the latter can only be, but should be, modified, the former may be removed, or toned down to the common condition of outdoor work. The reformation or removal of grievances is often left to strangers; yet Staffordshire has multitudes of earnest Christian workers, in connection with our numerous body of Christians, some "female preachers" of mature age and information, address congregations, and conduct public services. We were present at one of these services, and heard nothing that was not commendable and useful; but on returning through some steep lanes in Dudley, we found female operatives on the Sabbath afternoon, indulging in conduct and language bestial, and most reprehensible; and marvelled whether it might not be that some good, middle-aged ladies had mistaken their vocation. "The missing link" has not yet been found in some of these counties. Birmingham is deemed by its philanthropists the head quarters of the Freedman and Freedwomen's Aid Society. It is a noble distinction to be the centre of a noble work. Only a few miles inland Birmingham, that the clay-fields within from two to twenty miles of its Exchange, present female labour, and the labour of girls, quite as severe as cotton planting can be in the tropics; in circumstances, almost equally with slavery, inimical to the interests of morality, and with results not less deplorable and vicious. Until the present time, the associated miners, through their delegates, and by their friends in Parliament, have alone endeavoured to remove female labourers from the banks of coal pits; but there are many ladies in these counties, enriched by the wealth stubbornly wrung from beneath the soil, willing to assist noble objects, who have a grand cause, and the materials of a great reformation around them. They could remove a reproach from the doors of their own homes and mansions, if they could carry the accents for its removal.

Fifty intelligent, Bible women might work their way to the hearts of many among these five thousand female-workers in clay, and change the costume, habits, and even the practice of this labour, and these labourers. Paul may plant, and Apollus water, but God giveth the increase,—yet Paul was instructed to plant, and Apollus to water.

THE MOTHER'S VISION.

"Hush! I do not weep: it is over, now.—Patience!" they calmly said,
Vexing with words my wearied ear, and my child in my arms dead;
I stooped, with passionate grief, to kiss the little pallid face,
That, like to a waxen image, lay in my clasping arms' embrace.

I passed my fingers once again through the soft, bright, curling hair,
And drew the head to my desolate heart, that should never again rest there;
I kissed the dimpled hands and feet, and the broad, white, blue-veined breast,
And my heart could not feel, nor my lips confess that "God took him for the best."

I wanted my baby all night long, to rest near my dotting heart;
I wanted to watch his cradled sleep, with his rosy lips apart;
I wanted my baby's little hands, to play with my loosened hair;
I wanted my baby's babbling tones, to win me from every care.

I wanted my boy, I wanted him to grow up amid other men;
That, as my own life waned away, I might live in his life again;
And my heart was sore, O my heart was sore, when they laid him beneath the sod;
I could not to Heaven's angel give, I grudged him to his God.

I could not weep, but my wild complaint rang ceaseless night and day:
"Why were all other infants left, and my infant snatched away?"
Till at length, in the depths of the silent night, a form before me stood,
Whose presence filled my heart with joy, though a strange awe chilled my blood.

'Twas the little child,—'twas the little child they had taken from me away,—
From the warm clasp of my loving arms, to place him in damp cold clay;
In snowy robes, with two soft white wings, the flowers of the Better Land,
His brow enwreathed; while a small gold harp he held in his little hand.

But the cherub face in his infant life, which was ever so bright and glad,
Seemed dimmed now, and his large blue eyes filled with tear-drops ad;
I was silent first, but strong mother's love soon o'er-came my human fears,
And I asked my boy why angel-eyes were thus filled with mortal tears.

"Mother," he said, "from where I was laid to rest, 'neath the fresh green sod,
Has gone up your wild despairing cry—'I grudge him to his God!'
It darkens my spirit, even there 'mid the happy angel-band,
And the harp, which God's purest praise should hymn, hangs silent in my hand."

"But He is Love,—and a pitying glance has cast on thy sinful woe,
And to win back thy soul to peace, has sent me to tell thee what now I know.
Mother, had I to manhood grown, my nature fierce and wild,
Would have steeped my soul in darkest sin, and God took your little child."

"In tender mercy parting us, for a few brief passing years,
That we may meet again, to know no partings, griefs, or tears;
Then humbly bow thy will to His, whose mercy hems us round,
That the cloud from my spirit may pass away, and my harp with His praise resound!"

As he spoke, my heart was softening fast; as he ceased, my infant smiled,
With a ray so bright of Heaven's own light, that I scarcely knew my child:
His white wings moved, and beneath his touch the harp gave forth a sound
Which steeped my soul in bliss, so deep, I knew not what passed around.

When it died away, the child was gone, my little angel-son;
But I knew by the tears, now shed at last, that God's victory was won.
With morning light, by the grave I knelt—the dew yet gemmed the sod—
And with an hushed, contrite heart, gave him and myself to God.

ELIZABETH TOWNDRIDGE.

"WHO CARES?"

"Who cares?" said Martha Hutebings, setting down one dirty dish and taking up another; "nobody ever cared for me; I was bundled off to service before I were ten year old, because mother was dead, and aunt wanted me out of the way; and since then, I've been knocked about from pillar to post,—out of one place into another,—might have gone and or wicked, nobody minded; that's what I say, who cares?"

"God cares," said the grave, weak voice of little Tom, the errand boy,—a frail, sickly little fellow, who, somehow, contrived to make wit and skill supply the place of strength, and so succeed in the object of his ambition, and "keep his place."

"God!" said Martha; "how do you mean?"
"Why, He must care, you know; don't you about things as you've made yourself?"
"Sometimes I do, and sometimes I don't; depends upon what it is."

"But if you could make something alive, you would get fond of that, wouldn't you?"

"I suppose so; but, lo, Tom, what rubbish you can talk, to be sure, when once you give your mind to it."

"Was that rubbish?" said Tom, not at all resenting the assertion,—he was rather accustomed to finding himself out of his own depth, as well as other people's.

"Rubbish!—I should think so; but have you cleaned master's boots?"

"Oh, no! I forgot, I'll do them now; master would care about me if I didn't, wouldn't he?" said Tom, running off with a roguish smile.

"Care, yes," said Martha to herself, "like they would about the clock if it stopped, just about as much feeling for one as the other."

Clearly Martha was in a dismal mood; there could be no doubt about that,—she was tired, and it was very hot, and Martha's kitchen was not exactly the place one would have chosen to cool oneself in; an uncomfortable, sore feeling over her eyes, made her sit down and rest them, with a five minutes' nap; but her head, resting against the wall, rubbed off the coloring into her hair, and she got up again, saying, "However then footmen can stand being powdered, I can't think; bother it, my head feels like a Sand-Martin."

Martha had no very definite notion as to whether a Sand-Martin was fish, flesh, or fowl; but she had picked up the word with a Londoner's relish for anything rural, and supposed it must mean something smart; perhaps it was as well, that, just at that moment, she was not tantalised by the thought of the free breezy life of the dainty little bird she had named.

"Oh, dear! I wish I was dead," she said, presently; but a sudden, sharp pain through her temples seemed to suggest the near possibility of death; and, with a shiver, she turned her head into, "I wish I was a better girl, I wish I had learnt in my Bible or something; I wish,—oh! I wish there was anybody in all the wide world to care whether I lived or died." Then she stopped suddenly, for her throat seemed to dry up; and, with a terrified sense of falling down unknown depths, she sank upon the floor—poor Martha had a fever.

Martha's mistress was one of those people, colder in their win in heart, who seldom get justice done to them; she had to keep in order a large family, and larger school, and at first from sheer fatigue, had fallen into the habit of not speaking beyond what was absolutely necessary; but she was far from unkind, and though, to secure the safety of the rest of the household, Martha was removed at once to the hospital, Tom's mother was sent for, to go with her, and see that all was comfortable.

Tom's mother had for years been indebted to his mistress for constant little kindnesses, and therefore was not so much astonished as Martha would have been to receive a little purse of money with the injunction, "Let me know when it is spent, and see that she lacks nothing—poor girl."

Many days and nights Martha lay insensible; when at length she awoke, she found herself peacefully laid in a white, soft bed, with an unaccountable fragrance of strawberries pervading the cool, quiet air.

"I suppose it's heaven," she thought, "or else a dream; anyhow, I'll keep still, lest misss's bell should ring;" but some one said, "Won't you wake up, dear?" in a gentle, motherly voice—such a voice as had never addressed Martha since she could remember.

"Ah!" she said, contentedly, "that's just the way I should have thought they talked in heaven; it's very nice; I wonder I was afraid to die."

She had spoken aloud, and the motherly voice—this time with a shade of trouble in it—said, "Poor girl, she's a little little-headed still, but she'll soon come round; see," she continued to Martha, "only just look what your friends brought you."

"That's me," said Martha; "I haven't got any friends."
"Well, that's pretty," said another voice; so cheery and so thin—it reminded her of Tom's grown older. "Not got any friends, in fact!" the voice went on, "when they have sent you this!" "This," being put close to her, was exceedingly fragrant, that Martha opened her eyes, and found out where the strawberry oil had come from. It was a round, deep basket of British Queen's, which a slight, pale woman, in a widow's cap, was holding towards her.

"Don't you know what to do with them, dear?" said the motherly body, whose clean, provision of dress somehow told Martha that she was an hospital nurse.
"Oh, yes," said Martha, with a sigh of delight, as the first one melted in her mouth; "but I never saw such monsters."

"Yes," said the widow, looking pleased, "they wanted them to be first-rate, and there's been plenty of time to get them; to-day is the first day the doctor said you might have some."

"But such beauties," said Martha, again; "they must be rich people that sent them."

"Rich enough," said the widow, with a curious smile; and Martha feasted in silence, only now and then begging her companions to "take one to make it seem real." When she had finished, the widow said, "You don't know me, do you? I'm Tom's mother—you remember little Tom?"

"Oh, yes," said Martha, with a glance of compunction at the empty basket; "I wish I had saved him a strawberry."

"He's had his share, I fancy," said the widow, smiling.

"How?" said Martha.

"In giving them to you—he bought them, his brother and him, on purpose for you; they've been saving up for it ever since you've been ill."

"But how ever did they get the money?" said Martha.

"Oh! went messages and bell horses, and so on, in their meal times," said the widow.

"How good of them!—Oh, how good of them!" Martha was crying a little, between weakness and pleasure.

"Yes, they are good children, Tom especially—it was his thought." The widow's eyes were dewy with a mother's pride and joy. The good nurse alluded to tears, on principle; but, as she said afterwards, she "had not the heart to interfere," when Martha, half raising herself, drew the widow towards her and said, "Will you really be my friend? I've never had one in all my life, nobody cared for me since mother died."

"Somebody cares now, then," said the widow, her voice still as clear and cheery as a little bird's; "you may be dear to me instead of my daughter that died, if you like—she would have been just about your age. It used to remind me of her when Tom was talking about you."

"God in heaven, bless you," said Martha, whose tears of joy would not let her say more; but when the widow had all the elements of fire may devour it was arranging her for sleep, Martha said, "God forgive me for despairing,—I'll never say again, 'Who cares?'"

SADIE.

LOANS.—Strictly speaking, are not all our earthly gifts loans? We are accustomed to speak of them, as if their title was inherent in ourselves, yet their unannounced departure often corrects this error, and discloses the tenure by which they are held. Wealth, though one of the most coveted, is also amongst the most transitory of loans. It is unnecessary to revert to storied annals, or foreign lands, for a commentary on the inspired assertion that it taketh to itself wings, and flies away. It is subject to the sway of all the elements. Fire may devour it, water submerge it, earth swallow it, winds sweep it away. Its tendency to transition, to disappearance, without leaving a trace behind, is obvious to all, while the conscientious mind perceives yet another evil, the danger of loans. "What way can Christians take," says the pious John Wesley, "that their money sink them not into perdition? There is but one way, and that is, under heaven. And this is it: let those who gain all they can, and save all they can, likewise give all they can. Then the money will turn to grace, and the more treasure will they lay up in heaven." Wealth, unalloyed to benevolence and a sense of responsibility, is perilous to our eternal interests. Painfully, as a means of influence, of imparting happiness, relieving suffering, enlightening ignorance, it is one of the richest blessings.—Mrs. L. L. Sigourney.

"YES, DEAR! PAPA IS COMING."

There is a pretty picture, copies of which may be seen in many thousands of English homes at eventide:—A poor suddenly opening night and joy comes in, for the father has returned from the occupations of the day, and the mother's face kindles with gladness of greeting, while the little ones run towards him with outstretched arms, and eager lips done up ready for a kiss. Happy the man whom such a welcome awaits,—

"A child's kiss,

Set on his sighing lips shall make him glad."

No frightened blush proclaims his coming,—his children do not run away out of his sight for fear of harsh words and harsher blows. On the contrary, the sound of his footsteps is the signal for a general merry scamper, and a thorough shout of joy from the little ones waiting to be tossed. Happy the wife of such a husband,—her song should be the sweetest of all that are sung on earth.

Such a picture of such a home is our engraving this month. We need not tell our readers what family is here represented; for the faces of the Prince and Princess of Wales—the happy pair, whom the nation delights to honour—are now sufficiently familiar to the people of England, through the photographs which are in every window, and the opportunities which many have had of seeing the illustrious individuals themselves.

We are eminently a home-loving people. We delight in making our dwellings pleasant and happy. It is (or should be) the aim of everyone of us to bar our doors to the approaches of strife and contention, and open them wide to peace and love, and good-will.

And so it delights us to know that the highest personages in our land, live in happy homes,—homes made musical by the voices of childhood,—homes in which a parent's joy is felt, to which the home-coming is always a glad one.

And as it is in the palace, so it is in the cottage. The labourer at work in the harvest-field is glad when the sunset tinges the western clouds, because he thinks of the wife who is looking out of the window and watching for him; of the little ones who will not go to bed until they have given father a good-night kiss. The mechanic, working and the heat and dust, is glad to hear the bell which summons him home. The merchant, spending the day at his business with aching brain and puzzled brow, is as delighted as any of them, for he thinks not only of his grand drawing-room, or his costly pictures, but of the dear little one who, with bright blue eyes and flaxen curls, will spring into his arms and lay her soft cheek against his.

God be thanked for the happy homes of England. It is too true, that many of them are darkened by sin and sorrow, and poverty; but where love is, there is a strong redeeming power,—and joy, and gladness, and hope are where the children run to the door with glee at the father's return.

LAUNDRIES FOR THE WOMEN, AND MORE GOOD DWELLINGS FOR THE POOR.—Do our readers know Golden-lane, in the parish of St. Luke's? Have they glanced with a wholesome dread up that narrow thoroughfare which joins the Barbican at the junction of Beech and Red Cross-streets? Golden-lane is not a lovely lane. It is long and narrow and crooked, dirty and squalid and smoky. . . . It is in the heart of this unlovely locality that a German gentleman proposed to erect a stack of buildings which should contain improved dwellings, baths, and laundries for the poor who live in the surrounding lanes; the wretched poor who live in the surrounding lanes; that a handsome and spacious building has risen in the centre of this peopled wilderness, a Company has been formed to continue the practical working of the system. Whether the erection of this building is purely a philanthropic experiment, or a business speculation, matters not one straw. The pleasant, wholesome, airy little rooms are there; they may be had for 5s. or 6s. or 7s. a week; they offer, happy relief from the most painful squalor, and they offer besides the advantages of cleanliness in the matter of clothing; and for such things one ought to be grateful. The view from the roof of this building is one of the saddest that ever met mortal view. The wretched garrets saturated in dirt seem huddled together beneath the slumbering cloud of blue smoke; yet it was white looking out on this prospect that one gentleman observed, "England is prosperous by the great goodness of God;" and his companion replied, "We see it everywhere around us." If God gives England prosperity, England

takes care that the prosperity shall be filtered through an exceedingly small number of channels. What signifies a good harvest if people are starving? What signifies the blessing that God gives the country, if those with longest arms put their hands above the heads of their brothers, and grasp the blessing ere it reaches the earth? . . . The crowds of pitiable, sunken-cheeked children, bare-footed and bare-headed, who crowded round the building yesterday, were the best arguments possible in favour of its erection. The dim-eyed, sawy-dressed women who stood gossiping there, may have wondered what all the stir and bustle meant; let us hope that the momentary curiosity was not without result, and that these cleanly little rooms may soon be fully occupied. Already the greater portion of those which are finished have been let; and we can testify to the comfortable and pleasant appearance of these humble dwellings. They seem to have been constructed with the view to have all requisite household conveniences; while, besides the baths and laundries which are in such opportune contiguity, the roof of the building has been surrounded by an iron railing to form a drying ground for clothes. There is likewise a spacious lecture-hall, and many other of the like requisites, which give the great building the character of an isolated colony in that unhappy region. . . . Augustus Julius Vieweg has set an excellent example, which we hope to see followed in many other of the more densely populated districts of the metropolis.—*Morning Star*.

SONGS OF THE WORKERS.—No. 11.

A HARVEST HYMN.

TUNE.—*See the Conquering Hero comes.*

Welcome to the harvest time!
Now the earth is in her prime,
Covered o'er with sheaves of wealth,
Shelters to bring the poor man health:
And the earth is in her prime,
Welcome to the harvest time!
Lift the heart and raise the brow,
Boldly face the winter now;
Want, with haggard look and mien,
Shall not stand your joy between:
For the earth is in her prime,
Welcome to the harvest time!
Sing a song of praise to heaven—
Spring and summer have been given;
Genial sun and gentle rain,
Fell upon the precious grain:
And the earth is in her prime,
Welcome to the harvest time!
God has heard the prayer for bread,
Which his children daily said;
He will feed the widow's tears,
He will feed us through the years:
For the earth is in her prime,
Welcome to the harvest time!
Welcome, welcome, precious sheaves;
Welcome, welcome, Autumn leaves;
Welcome e'en the wind's wild swell—
God with us—all is well;
And the earth is in her prime,
Welcome to the harvest time!

M. F.

MORE GOOD NEWS.—The Wives and Mothers of our Working Men residing in the neighbourhood of Islington, will be glad to learn that another portion of the Peabody House has been applied to the purchase of the site of a pile of buildings in Essex-road, Islington, once densely occupied by a community for the most part consisting of some of the worst characters in the metropolis. The new building is substantially constructed of brick, and consists of four blocks of houses, five stories in height, which will be let out in tenements of one, two, and three rooms, at an estimated rental of 2s., 3s., and 4s. per week respectively. Each block will afford accommodation for sixty families, or 240 in the aggregate. The rooms are each of them, a clean, airy, and 12 feet long, and of a suitable height. The attic of each block is paved with tiles from the Isle of Wight, and is surmounted by a handsome ornamental turret. There is also accommodation for washing, drying, &c., and at each end of the buildings a cistern 12 feet long, 6 feet wide, and 4 feet deep, capable of containing 7,600 gallons of water. Everything has been done to render the sanitary arrangements complete in every respect. It is contemplated to erect workshops for the accommodation of the tenants on the east side of the blocks. These, however, although of course under the control of the trustees, will be irrespective of Mr. Peabody's gift, and will be let at a very moderate rental. Numerous applications have already been made for tenements by men whose wages average from 18s. 3s. per week.—The class for whom they were intended by the benevolent donor; but none will be taken whose character will not bear the strictest investigation.—*Church Standard*.

BY ROYAL LETTERS PATENT. THE "SINGER" MANUFACTURING CO.'S UNRIVALLED LOCK-STITCH FAMILY SEWING MACHINES.

Price 28 10s. and upwards.
The cheapest and most reliable Machine in the market, combining the greatest simplicity, convenience and elegance, with all improvements that have been invented, especially the Family Sewing Machine.
New styles received.
Illustrated Catalogues gratis and Post Free.
The "Singer" Manufacturing Company, 147, Chancery Lane, E.C.

THE "WANZER" NEW IMPROVED LOCK-STITCH SEWING MACHINE, so favourably recommended in this paper, in the February Number, and as the latest improvement, and is the best for Families, Dressmakers, Tailors, and Manufacturers. Instruction cards to purchasers. Prospectus, Post Free. The "Wanzer" Sewing Machine Company (Limited), 4, Chancery Lane, E.C., London.

PENMANSHIP—A neat, elegant, and Self-instructing System of Writing seen on receipt of 25 stamps, by J. HARRIS, Writing-Master, 4, Woking Street, Dursley.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

OPINIONS OF "THE BRITISH WORKWOMAN."
"Amongst the many works of great value intended for the elevation, improvement, and instruction of the industrious classes, we do not know of one which has accomplished so much good, and reached a point of so much influence in the last year's existence, as the one entitled *THE BRITISH WORKWOMAN*. We have watched the growth of other works of the same class, but we do not know of one which so thoroughly interested well-to-do classes, whose special good it was prepared, as the one before us. First, its engravings are of striking and appropriate character, illustrating matters which will be sure to win the attention of the mind, as well as to gratify the eye. The variety and uniform excellence of the articles, combined with their practical character, mark another feature of success; they are short, pointed, and written intelligently, and in a kind spirit. The type is large and good, and the getting-up of the work shows a spirit of enterprise which will not fail here to be appreciated. There is no pretension to a deep or elevated elevating moral tone runs through both the prose and the poetry. Many of the incidents recorded are of an inspiring character, and show that much good may be done by a word fully spoken either by a child, a wife, or a father. We do not know of any other work in which the happy influence of a woman's strength and energy is so fully set forth in all the varied spheres of life and duty. It is emphatically a woman's book, and we hope every husband will give it to his wife, and every brother give it to his sister."—*Welfare Times*.
"A periodical specially adapted to the feelings, the duties, and the wants of Women. The 'British Workwoman' appears admirably suited to its mission. Its articles are well written, and of a more serious piece, simple, interesting and practical. We can honestly recommend this little paper, and it is God-given to the home and to the heart of every British wife, mother, and maid."—*Worcester News*.
"This periodical is good, and ought to be placed by the side of its companion, the 'British Worker', and others of that class, in every cottage. It gives sound advice and instruction to our women; if they would follow it, we should have more happy homes."—*Cambridge Magazine*.

NOTICE.

To encourage those who may be willing to exert themselves in an effort to increase the usefulness of *THE BRITISH WORKWOMAN*, and extend its circulation, it has been arranged to present, as an appropriate reward,

A FIRST-CLASS SEWING MACHINE OF THE VALUE OF TEN POUNDS (49s.)

By one of the best Manufactures of the kind, to that Woman who may obtain the highest number of Subscribers for six months; viz., from July to Dec. inclusive, and to the next highest.

A BEAUTIFULLY BOUND EMBROIDERED.

COMMITTEE OF SUPERVISION.

Rev. WILLIAM ROGERS, A.M.,
Rector of Dissington.

Rev. NEWELL LALL, LL.B.,
Minister of Surrey Chapel.

Rev. ROBERT MACGURE, A.M.,
Minister of Clarendon.

JOHN MAW DARTON, Esq.,
Author of the famous Girls who have become Illustrators.

Early application for Subscription Books should be made to the Publisher, or to R. Willoughby, 39, Midland Road, Islington, N. If by post a stamp to be enclosed for reply.

ALL Masters, Mistresses, Fathers, Husbands, Brothers, and the Employers of Workwomen and Girls, are invited to place before their Servants, Mothers, Wives, Sisters, and Employees, copies of "The British Workwoman," under a full assurance to themselves that great good may result.

The First Yearly Volume of "THE BRITISH WORKWOMAN" is now ready. Price 1s. 6d. It is dedicated to HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA. Packets of the "BRITISH WORKWOMAN" may be sent to any part of the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Shetland and Orkney Isles, France, or Belgium, at the following rates:—

1 copy for 4d., or for one year 4s.

8 " 8d., " 8s.

12 " 12d., " 12s.

24 " 24d., " 24s.

50 " 50d., " 50s.

TO BE PAID FOR IN ADVANCE.

* Where it is thought desirable that Gratuitous distribution of this Work should be made among the various societies, and other persons who were to be supplied with copies, the names of the persons to be supplied, and the names of the societies, should be sent to RICHARD WILLOUGHBY, "The British Workwoman" Office, 35, Strand, W.C.; or 39, Midland Road, N., to whom also communications for the Editor should be sent, post-free.